

International Tourists' Perception and Behavior towards
Government's Beach Clean-up Policy:
A Case Study of Patong Beach, Phuket

การรับรู้และพฤติกรรมของนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติที่มีต่อนโยบายการจัดระเบียบ
ชายหาด กรณีศึกษา: หาดป่าตอง จังหวัดภูเก็ต

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of international tourists towards the government's beach clean-up policy at Patong Beach, Phuket. Specifically, it seeks to examine the relationships between international tourists' perceptions, their beach-use behavior and their satisfaction of Patong Beach after the government's beach clean-up policy was implemented. The results of the study were drawn from 389 international tourists who have visited Patong Beach since the implementation of this policy. One-way ANOVA and the Pearson Correlation Coefficient were employed to test the hypotheses. The findings suggested that there were significant differences in international tourists' perceptions of the policy and their beach use behaviors. Ultimately, practical implications towards beach management and policy implementation were also discussed.

Keywords : Tourists' Perceptions, Beach Management, Beach Tourism, Patong Beach

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจการรับรู้ของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติที่มีต่อนโยบายการจัดระเบียบชายหาดโดยรัฐบาล ที่หาดป่าตอง จังหวัดภูเก็ต และทดสอบความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการรับรู้, พฤติกรรมการใช้ชายหาดและความพึงพอใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติต่อหาดป่าตอง ภายหลังมีการปรับใช้นโยบายการจัดระเบียบชายหาด ซึ่งงานวิจัยนี้เป็นการศึกษาเชิงปริมาณ โดยใช้วิธีเก็บแบบสอบถาม จำนวนทั้งหมด 389 ชุด จากกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติที่เคยไปเยือนหาดป่าตอง ภายหลังปรับใช้นโยบายการจัดระเบียบชายหาด และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยวิธีการวิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวนทางเดียวและสหสัมพันธ์เพื่อใช้ในการทดสอบสมมติฐาน โดยผลวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่า มีความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญของ 1) การรับรู้ และ 2) พฤติกรรมการใช้ชายหาด ของนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ นอกจากนี้ยังมีผลการอภิปรายเกี่ยวกับแนวทางในการบริหารจัดการชายหาด และ แผนปฏิบัติการของนโยบายการจัดระเบียบชายหาดอีกด้วย

คำสำคัญ : การรับรู้ของนักท่องเที่ยว, การจัดการชายหาด, พฤติกรรมการใช้ชายหาด, หาดป่าตอง

Introduction

Beaches are important recreational and leisure areas for the economics of coastal countries Vaz et al. (2009). Phuket Island has several reputable beautiful beaches and Phuket tourism is undoubtedly one of the fastest growing industries which generates enormous income to the local population and to Thailand. Nevertheless, it has been more intriguing since the beach clean-up policy was implemented by the National Council for Peace and Order. This policy is one of the predominant parts of the council's plans to restore the image of Thailand as one of the world's best tourist destinations. According to TAT Newsroom of July 2014, one goal is to improve the tourist's experience for travelling. Consequently, beaches in Phuket have been comprehensively cleaned without the aligned beach beds, chairs, umbrellas, restaurants on the beachfront and other infrastructure expected by tourists.



Patong Beach was chosen for this study due to its tourism significance. It is viewed as the most popular tourist attraction in Phuket according to (Auikam, 2016), and also as the most developed beach offering numerous tourist facilities, and physical infrastructures (Salmond, 2005). In addition, The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2014) mentioned that it has been widely affected by the policy. Changes due to this policy are, in part, illustrated in Figure 1.

Patong Beach in 2013



Patong Beach in 2015



Figure 1 The comparison of Patong Beach before (Left image) and after the government has implemented the “beach clean-up policy” of 2014 (Right image).

The government’s beach clean-up policy regulates businesses in order to return the beach to its natural state. Therefore, Patong Beach has been restored to a state almost as it was 20 years ago. Thus, there has been a rapid alteration in the short term for tourists travelling to Patong Beach. In particular, the government also launched Phuket’s public beach regulations by dividing the beach area into two zones to clarify what is or what is not allowed on the beach (see Figure 2). As a result, these actions are removed from the enjoyment of the beaches. On the other hand, they may be useful to preserve the natural environment. Unquestionably, it is important that the government and local authorities should monitor ‘opinions and perceptions’ regarding beach users’ priorities from which recommendations may be made to shape and influence beach management policy guidelines (Morgan et al., 1993; Williams and Morgan, 1995).

More significantly, it is also important to include beach users' preferences and priorities in management plans because it allows for the development of more specific policy recommendations for different types of beaches and to guarantee tourist satisfaction (Williams & Micallef, 2009). In this context, essentially, the beach management policy at Patong Beach might directly affect tourists' perceptions, beach use behavior and impact on how they evaluate their satisfaction.

In addition, individual tourists can make decisions based on what they perceived about destinations at that moment, and the role of perceptions in tourists' behavior may be linked on how they recognize those destinations. As explained by Kotler & Armstrong (2000) "as far as tourists' characteristics are concerned, tourists come from different countries with different cultures, attitudes, lifestyles, therefore they have different perceptions about one identical tourism product". Moreover, the use of beaches and their preference of recreational activities are crucial for selecting a beach destination from several alternatives.

More significantly, most earlier studies generally reported on coastal management, especially environmental impacts (e.g. Branch, et al., 2008). This paper attempts to add to the body of knowledge by providing empirical findings on tourist perceptions and behavior, and the impacts of beach management. It seeks to investigate four areas, namely: (1) International tourists' perceptions towards the government's beach clean-up policy (2) Beach use behavior at Patong Beach (3) International tourists' satisfaction with Patong Beach following the government's beach clean-up policy and (4) The differences in international tourists' perceptions, beach use behavior and satisfaction among tourists with different age groups and nationalities. Furthermore, the results could be credible evidence in order to reconsider and adjust the policy's implementation so that Phuket could retain return visitors and increase more first-time visitors in the long term.



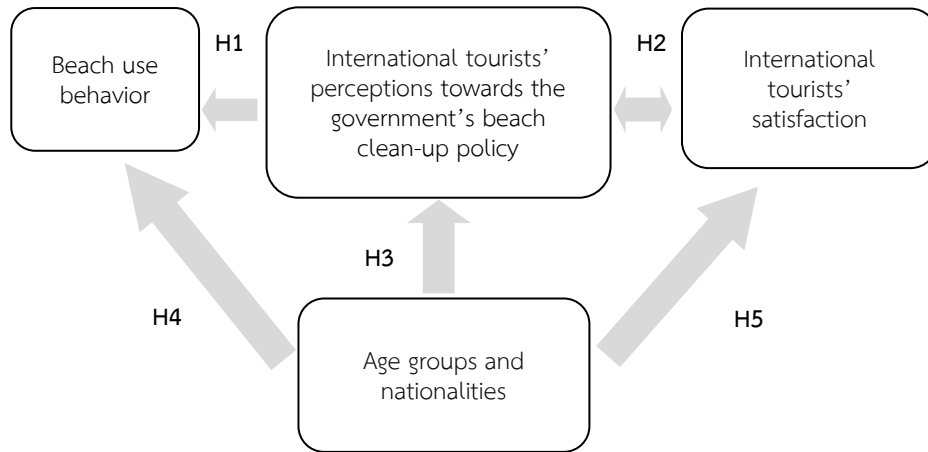


Figure 2 Conceptual framework

Literature review

1. Beach management

The definition of beach management is to address social, economic, and environmental aspects of beach use Simm, et al. (1995). Alternatively, Bird's (1996) definition greatly emphasizes the major role of beach users' needs. Furthermore, interpretation of beach management is that it reflects taking a decision of action that reflects governmental policy objectives and the socio-economic and environmental capabilities of beach areas (Micallef & Willaims, 2011).

In order to pursue beach management effectively and efficiently, in this case, it is a pivotal responsibility of the government to observe the situation and to implement a proactive stakeholder engagement. As can be noticed, those entrepreneurs around Patong Beach have been closely dealing with tourists, thus they are one of the potential resources for tourism trend. For that reason, some opinions regarding to tourists' perceptions towards this specific policy may influence the adjustment of implementation plans. Also, necessary amenities and beach infrastructure can be enhanced to meet tourism demand.

2. Tourists' perception, beach use behavior and satisfaction

Perception has been defined by Moutinho (1993) as the process of interpreting stimuli in a meaningful way. In the context of tourism, this is how tourists perceive and interpret destination choice, available attractions and related tourism policies into their own views. Marin, et al. (2009) argued that a clear understanding of tourist perception towards the destination is the key to destination planning and implementation. On the contrary, the ignorance of their preferences may lead public authorities to over/underestimate the importance and investment of various provided facilities, services, or beach management, as public expectations vary depending on user categories (De Ruyck, et al., 1995; Roca & Villares, 2008). Therefore, the lack of information about tourists' perceptions regarding "the government's beach clean-up policy" should be consummated. In fact, knowledge of tourist perceptions of Patong Beach is limited. Among the limited information available, Ping (2011) reported that prior to the implementation of the policy foreign tourists perceived Patong Beach as an overcrowded beach destination with discarded trash and insufficient bathing areas. No research into tourist perceptions has been reported since the policy was introduced.

As there is a wide range of recreational activities that can be available at a beach, the use of beaches and recreational activities are imperative in a person's choice when beach destinations are selected. Thus, understanding patterns of beach use would be beneficial to better produce beach management and planning Marin et al., (2009). Additionally, Jackson, et al. (1989) explained that each specific recreational area could be well-managed by interpreting combinations of individual leisure patterns. In this study, the new regulations at Patong Beach are highly influential to some recreational activities such as sunbathing. Hence, the preferences and beach use behavior of individuals that are expressed in different ways could be due to different perceptions on the policy.



Tourist satisfaction has been a priority subject of research in recent years (Kozak, Bigné & Andreu, 2003; Tsiotsou & Vasioti, 2006). Chon & Olsen (1991) discovered that the best suitable correlation is tourists' expectations about destination and their satisfaction level. Additionally, satisfaction was pinpointed by traditional literature due to consumer behavior that consequences occur through a psychological process of recognizing the needs and evaluation of experienced products (Peter & Olson, 1996). Thus, the tourists' satisfaction was included in this study, also it was intriguing that the results in this study were represented by being based on each attribute of Patong Beach after the government had put the new regulations into place.

Cohen, et al. (2013) provided a comprehensive review of empirical studies on tourist perception, behavior and satisfaction. The authors drew their conclusion on the links between these three factors. Lee & Lockshin (2012) provided the consistent conclusion that differences in tourist perception may lead to the variation of their behavioral intention and satisfaction. Therefore, based on the above literature, hypotheses 1 and 2 can be formulated in relation to the beach clean-up policy in this study context as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There are differences in international tourists' perceptions towards the government's beach clean-up policy by different tourist groups based on their beach use behavior.

Hypothesis 2: The overall international tourists' perception towards the government's beach clean-up policy at Patong Beach is positively related to their satisfaction.

3. Demographic profiles influencing tourists' perception, beach use behavior and their satisfaction

Although, earlier research was conducted by focusing on the effect of several demographic variables on a destination's image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Joppe, Martin & Wallen 2001; Hui & Wan, 2003), this study only dealt with the age group and nationality due to the results established that dissimilar age groups and nationalities of international tourists significantly influenced their perception, behavior and satisfaction. Lepisto & Damonte (1994) discovered that the choice of a destination was influenced by different ages, thus it was a distinguishing variable. Accordingly, the age of individuals has differential effects on the perception of several tourist destinations (Baloglu & McCleary, 2000). Considerably, as the government designed new sunbathing areas and limited the amount of facilities and services on the beach, there was a likelihood that those of a higher age group might not have had a positive agreement and high satisfaction with the policy. Notably, nationality was another important factor in this study due to it is a subculture of people who shared the same value based on their common experience or lifestyle. Furthermore, Pizam & Sussman (1995) directly studied about the value of nationality in regard to tourist behavior, and it was suggested that nationality should be taken to examine whether it differentiates tourist's perception. (Jonsson & Devonish, 2008) also stated that nationality can be assessed in conjunction with age. As the age group and nationality are consistent with previously studied researches, the following hypotheses can be derived as follows:

Hypothesis 3: There are differences in international tourists' perceptions towards the government's beach clean-up policy at Patong Beach among the tourists with dissimilar age groups and nationalities.

Hypothesis 4: There are differences in beach use behavior at Patong Beach among international tourists with dissimilar age groups and nationalities.

Hypothesis 5: There are differences in international tourists’ satisfaction with Patong Beach among the tourists with dissimilar age groups and nationalities.

4. The government’s beach clean-up policy

Phuket’s public beach regulations were prepared for multilingual signs and then monitored and controlled by the relevant government agencies. Particularly, these signs have been placed since the 25th of February, 2015. Therefore, it was very advantageous to clarify understandings of tourists as to what is allowed and what is not allowed in each zone. As the figure 3 shown below:



Figure 3 Phuket’s public beach regulations

Specifically, from general observation, there has been negative feedback widely spoken on social media regarding the impacts of the current policy at Patong Beach. Also, there was a protest by international tourists on 16th of February 2016 because they were disgruntled that policemen asked them to keep beach beds away from the beach. However, another possible reason might be that ineffective communication failed to meet tourists' understanding. Meanwhile, Phurit Martwongsa (Marketing Vice President of Phuket Tourism Association) claimed that "even the percentage of tourist arrivals slightly decreased to 70% after policy was actioned, and then dropped to 50% again. However, it was thought that the Russian financial crisis was a crucial factor in this. Nevertheless, tourist arrivals in January of 2015 gradually rose to 65% and sharply increased up to 90% again" Thairath Online (2015). Moreover, The Patong Hotels Associations, Suphattra Jaruariyanon (2014) also mentioned, "Definitely, this is an uncontrollable factor which causes both of positive and negative views from tourists' perspective. Also, if the results could be confirmed then the findings could provide profitable evidence for further beach management policies at Patong Beach.

Methodology

In order to test the hypotheses and permit generalizability of the results, quantitative approach involving face-to-face survey. The questionnaire was originally drafted in English and translated to Chinese due to a large number of Chinese tourists in Phuket and Patong. To initiate the questionnaire, the researcher essentially adopted questions from previous empirical researches and imperceptibly modified some questions based on the government's beach clean-up policy to conform to current circumstances at Patong Beach. As a result, it was composed of five main parts as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Measurement instrument

Construct	No. of questions	Type of questions	The researcher (s)
1) Tourists' perception towards this policy after government has applied "Zone Management"	16	5 Point Likert Scale/Free response strategy	Devised by researcher based on Phuket's public beach regulations
2) Tourists' beach use behavior and their preferences	26	Multiple choice response strategy/ Free response strategy	Grainne S. Maguire, Kelly K. Miller, Michael A. Weston, Kirtsten Young who conducted ocean & coastal management research, Elisabet Roca, Miriam Villares, M.I. Ortego (2008)
3) Tourists' satisfaction with Patong Beach	27	5 Point Likert Scale	Yuan Ping (2011)
4) Tourists' revisit intention	6	5 Point Likert Scale	Chuthathip Charoensuwan (n.d.): 王崇昱, 2011: Tran Thi Ai Cam, 2011
5) Personal and classification data	11	Multiple choice response strategy	Elisabet Roca, Miriam Villares, M.I. Ortego (2008)

Essentially, to strengthen the quality of measurement, the researcher developed the questionnaire by asking 3 experienced university lecturers in tourism and related areas to check validity of the questionnaire. Also, the questionnaire was revised and revamped based on the comments from a pre-test of 17 samples. Afterwards, for internal consistency, the scale reliability was assessed by examining Cronbach's alpha. The values of all constructs are reported slightly above 0.8 which represents a very high and respectable range, suggesting very good internal consistency and reliability for the scale, with this sample due to (George & Mallery, 2003) proposed the rules that "> .8 – Good,".

Furthermore, as non-probability sampling based techniques were considered impractical, convenience sampling method was chosen for the study. Only tourists who visited Patong Beach after the government's beach clean-up policy was implemented were invited to complete the questionnaire. Data collection was progressively implemented from July the 12th to September the 28th, 2015 and questionnaires were personally distributed to tourists at Patong Beach, Phuket International Airport and some of them were left at the front desk of hotels near Patong Beach. As a result, 481 filled-out questionnaires were returned, but due to missing data, 389 questionnaires were valid and included for data analysis. To describe the basic features of the data, descriptive statistics were used, and One-way ANOVA technique was performed to compare the means whether there were any significant differences between each variable. The last analysis is Correlation Coefficient, which is a measurement of how strongly the variables are related between each other.

Results

1. Sample with demographic profiles

Firstly, the sample of this study comprised of male (56.3%) and female (43.4%). Of this sample, approximately 36% were aged 21-30 years and 24.7% were aged 31-40 years. Tourists aged from 41-50 and 51-60 years respectively were approximately 13% each. A small amount were aged above 60 (6.2%) and below 20 (4.9%). Among the tourists, there were three main nationalities including European (36.8%), Asian (30.3%) and Australian and New Zealand (18.5%) also there was a slight percentage reported by other nationalities.

Table 2 Demographic profiles representing age group and nationality of the samples (N=389)

Age group		F	Percentage (%)	Nationality	F	Percentage (%)
Group 1	<20	19	4.9	Asian	118	30.3
	21-30	144	37.0	European	143	36.8
Group 2	31-40	96	24.7	North American	28	7.2
	41-50	52	13.4	South American	10	2.6
Group 3	51-60	53	13.6	African	9	2.3
	>60	24	6.2	AUS/NZ	72	18.5
				Others	9	2.3

Note. AUS is representing for Australian, NZ is representing for New Zealand/ F = Frequency

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of international tourists' perception and their satisfaction (N=389)

Variable	N	M (Mean)	SD (Standard Deviation)
<i>Tourists' perception</i>	353	3.43	.71
<i>Overall tourists' satisfaction</i>	387	3.57	.98
– Atmosphere and social ambiance	374	3.40	.73
– Environmental condition	380	3.16	.98
– Infrastructures and facilities	363	3.11	.81
– Natural attraction	382	3.63	.81

Note. Mean ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree)



2. Classification Data

On the basis of international tourists' behavior, it was noticed that the highest percentage of them arrived to Patong Beach by walking (49.1%), followed by their own vehicles (23.9%). For accommodation, the tourists stayed at nearby hotels (75.8%) and some of them rented for longer holiday (17.5%). Furthermore, it was found that past experiences were the first factor influencing their decision to visit Patong Beach (25.7%). Likewise, they also chose Patong Beach due to recommendations (22.6%), and social media (20.6%).

3. International tourists' perception towards the government's beach clean-up policy

Table 3, indicates the perception of "government's beach clean-up policy" with regard to Phuket's public beach regulation at Patong Beach with a mean of 3.43. In particular, One-way ANOVA was employed to further investigate the differences in perception among international tourists' with different beach use behaviors. The findings in Table 4 demonstrate that there were significant differences in perception by different numbers with regard to the time of the visit and the amount of time spent on Patong beach ($F = 9.53, p \leq 0.05$) as a post hoc analysis was carried out. Thus, (1) first time international tourist, 2nd and 3rd time tourists consented that this policy more positively than those who had visited more than 3 times, (2) international tourists who spent time less than an hour on the beach and those who spent time between 1-3 hours also assented with this policy more positively than tourists who spent time more than 3 hours there. However, with regard to the amount of money spent, there was no significant difference that appeared. As a result, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

Table 4 The differences in international tourists' perception towards a government's beach clean-up policy by different tourist groups based on their beach use behavior

	F-value	Sig.	Mean Difference	Post Hoc Analysis
No. of times of visit	9.53	.00*	.36	First time > More than 3 times
		.01*	.30	2-3 times > More than 3 times
Length of time spent	7.0	.01*	.40	Less than 1 hr. > 3-5 hrs.
		.02*	.40	Less than 1 hr. > More than 5 hrs.
		.00*	.37	1-3 hrs. > 3-5 hrs.
		.01*	.38	1-3 hrs. > More than 5 hrs.
Amount of money spent	1.30	NS	- .-	

* One-way ANOVA is significant at the $p \leq 0.5$ level

The findings from open-ended questions were also coded and reported, thus most of tourists expressed their opinions as follows:

“The overall of policy is good planning in terms of beach management. However, in point of fact, it is difficult to implement and it requires a longer time to make a clearer understanding for tourists. Also, it is equally necessary to consider how to retain and attract more tourists in order to boost the tourism industry and fairly generate incomes to locals”

“In particular, the majority of respondents truly need beach beds, umbrellas, chairs to be allowed on Patong Beach. Definitely, the government should apportion special beach more than 10 per cent of entire beach because these facilities are necessary for elderly tourists.”

“Significantly, there are too many vendors selling the same services and they harass tourist who are trying to relax. They deem that fully-facilities on the beach would offer them a better experience for travelling and they would be willing to revisit in the future. Moreover, they have high anticipation of qualified services and reasonable prices.”

4. International tourists’ beach use behavior and their preferences

In relation to the time period that international tourists prefer to spend on Patong Beach, it was found that the majority of them preferred to spend time in the afternoons (58.9%), and a similar percentage of them in the evenings and mornings of 36.2% and 31.1% respectively. Only 11.1% of them preferred to spend time there at night.

Interestingly, a descriptive statistic in Table 5 showed that “Sunbathing” was the first activity that they expected to do on Patong Beach, followed by “Walking on the beach” and “Swimming”. As a matter of fact, the number of tourists who expected to sunbathe was lower than who actually sunbathed on Patong Beach. Consequently, it can noticeably be implied that the policy might affect sunbathing. On the other hand, a significant amount of international tourists do these activities: “Walking on the beach”, “Photography” and “Swimming”. Another finding which is worth noting was “Snorkeling” as this number showed the highest tourist expectation compared to the number of those who actually did it on their holidays. In spite of this, tourists identified their preferences of activities, facilities and services which should be added and removed on Patong Beach as shown in Table 6.

Table 5 International tourists' preferences for recreational activities (N=389)

Activities	Frequency		Difference
	<i>Expected to do</i>	<i>Actually doing</i>	
Sunbathing	219	189	+ 30
Walking on the beach	206	296	- 90
Dog walking	116	51	+ 65
Playing volleyball/soccer	136	64	+ 72
Photography	164	240	- 76
Cycling	100	63	+ 37
Reading a book	177	154	+ 23
Dining/picnic	143	137	+ 6
Parasailing	121	67	+ 54
Snorkeling	144	42	+ 102
Swimming	198	235	- 37
Sailboard	104	55	+ 49
Long tail boat	107	58	+ 49
Jet ski	127	81	+ 46
Banana boat/speed boat	111	81	+ 30
Massage	154	132	+ 22
Tattoo service	86	74	+ 12
Hair braiding service	104	47	+ 57
Manicure/pedicure	121	67	+ 54
Horse riding	96	41	+ 55

Note. Refers to expectation to do the activity is more than those people actually doing the activity- Refers those people actually doing the activity is more than those people expecting to do it "Bold numbers" indicate the highest number in each column



Table 6 Opinions of international tourists' preferences about recreational activities, facilities and services on Patong beach

Recreational activities and facilities should be added	Recreational activities and facilities should be removed
1. Provide more public toilets, shower facilities in good condition and maintained (foot showers are recommended where possible)	1. Motor sports and dangerous activities such as jet-ski, parasailing due to the harms they can do to people who are swimming in that area, also there are no obvious signs separating each zone.
2. Increase the amount of bins and put them near the beachfront and empty them more frequently.	2. Illegal vendors and time share sellers (It is also very pivotal to control vendors who selling the same services on the beach).
3. Better trained and clearly visible life guards.	
4. Access to parking lots.	
5. Tourist information.	

5. The relationship between international tourists' perception towards a government's beach clean-up policy and their satisfaction

Table 7 Pearson Correlation Coefficients Results: Relationship between international tourists' perception and their satisfaction

Attributes of Satisfaction	Tourists' perception	
	r	P-value
Atmosphere and social ambiance	.473**	.00
Environmental condition	.381**	.00
Infrastructures and facilities**	.507**	.00
Natural attraction	.407**	.00
Overall satisfaction	.485**	.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between international tourists' perceptions towards the government's beach clean-up policy and satisfaction was examined using the Pearson Correlation Coefficients in Hypothesis 2, where it was predicted that overall perception was positively related to satisfaction. The results appeared to show that there were all uphill linear relationships between variables. In relation to each attribute, in this study, perception exhibited that the most significantly positive correlation was to "Infrastructures and facilities" ($r = .507^{**}$), while "Environmental condition" associated with perception was in the lowest positive correlation ($r = .381^{**}$). Take into consideration, Table 3 which notified that tourists evaluated their satisfaction with a mean of 3.57. In contrast, it was quite advertent that "Infrastructures and facilities" showed the lowest mean score as 3.11. As a result this, it could be seen that Hypothesis 2 was fully supported.

6. The differences in international tourists' perception, beach use behaviors and satisfaction among tourists with dissimilar age groups and nationalities

Table 8 ANOVA Results: The differences in international tourists' perception by dissimilar age groups, nationalities

	F-value	Sig.	Mean Difference	Post Hoc Analysis
Age group	4.27	.00*	.34	Group1 > Group3
Nationality	5.82	.00*	.47	Asian > European

* $p \leq 0.5$

Refer to Table 8, it was discovered that international tourists whose age range was less than 30 years old perceived this policy more positively than those who were aged more than 50 years old or elderly people ($F = 4.27$, $p = \leq 0.5$). Also, Asian tourists had a more positive agreement than European tourists ($F = 5.82$, $p = \leq 0.5$). Thus, it can be concluded that Hypothesis 3 was fully supported.

Table 9 ANOVA Results: The differences in international tourists' behavior by dissimilar age groups, nationalities

	F-value	Sig.	Mean Difference	Post Hoc Analysis
No. of times of visit among age group	11.06	.02* .00*	.27 .54	Group 2 > Group 1 Group 3 > Group 1
Length of time spent among age group	6.47	.03* .00*	.25 .39	Group 2 > Group 1 Group 3 > Group 1
Length of time spent among nationality	11.63	.00* .00* .00*	.52 .68 .94	European > Asian European > Australian/ New Zealand South American > Australian/ New Zealand
Amount of money spent among nationality	3.05	.04* .01*	1.70 1.48	Others > Asian Others > Australian/ New Zealand

* $p \leq 0.5$ level

In this analysis, it can be seen that the international tourists whose ages' ranged above 30 years old visited Patong Beach more frequently ($F = 11.06$, $p = \leq 0.5$), and normally spent more time on the beach than younger tourists ($F = 6.47$, $p = \leq 0.5$). Additionally, the result revealed that European actually spent more time on the beach than Asians, Australians and New Zealanders, whereas South Americans also spent more time than Australians and New Zealanders ($F = 11.63$, $p = \leq 0.5$). Another results showed that tourists from Saudi Arabia, The Middle East and Russia spent more money at Patong Beach than those from Asia and Australia and New Zealand ($F = 3.05$, $p = \leq 0.5$). Hence, Hypothesis 4 was fully supported.



Table 10 ANOVA Results: The differences in international tourist satisfaction by dissimilar age groups, nationalities

	F-value	Sig.	Mean Difference	Post Hoc Analysis
Age group	.87	NS	-	-
Nationality	4.35	.00*	.46 Asian > European .54 Australian/ New Zealand > European	

$p \leq 0.5$ level

The last results showed that there were only significantly different satisfactions among different nationalities of tourists. Asian, Australian and New Zealander tourists were more content with Patong Beach than European tourists ($F = 4.35$, $p = \leq 0.5$). Consequently, Hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

Discussion

This study showed evidence that international tourists did not comprehend the government's beach clean-up policy very positively, more importantly, the current beach zone for sunbathing areas was deemed to be the priority which is not an optimal balance for many international tourists. One of the results are in line with previous studies. As (Maythawin & Suwattana, 2014) argued that the significant drawbacks of Patong Beach were that beach precinct was dominated by local entrepreneurs selling stuffs and gaining unfair advantages on tourists. Therefore, this previously-mentioned result postulates that tourists could have been unimpressed with Patong Beach. More significantly, permitted facilities for sunbathing need to be re-considered, in particular, the removal of sun beds and chairs. Following (Orams & Carr, 2008), sunbathing is a popular land-based recreational activity, also it was discovered in this study that sunbathing is the first activity that tourists anticipated to do on Patong Beach. Nevertheless, the emphasis has been shifted to obstacles experienced by elderly tourists as they will not fully enjoy relaxing on Patong Beach without those necessary facilities.

Moreover, it has been argued that familiarity with the location performed a critical role at some beaches and it seemed that reassurance from the familiarity was more preferable rather than risk the unknown. Furthermore, it was discovered that experiences perhaps build a long relationship and reconnect tourists with their past, thus this is one of a powerful meaning of a beach visit (Tunstall & Penning-Rowsell, 1998). Furthermore, it was found that tourists naturally chose Patong Beach based on their past experiences, so they anticipated visiting the same place that they had an association with before. Thus, it is suggested that the government should implement action plans and educate people with regard to clear and accurate information and build up effective public communication in order to raise the public's awareness of the government's beach clean-up policy. Additionally, the past empirical study by Ping (2011) provided similar evidence to this study that "facilities and infrastructures" are still the major shortcomings of Patong Beach at the moment due to aesthetics while beach is hampered by disposed garbage, a lack of toilets, and insufficient designated bathing areas. In particular, activities, facilities and services on the beach are also inadequate and require development. Therefore, the tourists were certainly not satisfied with these attributes of Patong Beach. This scarcity of infrastructures and facilities could be described as a terrible "environmental condition".

Also, what this study attempts to investigate is the differences in perception, beach use behavior and satisfaction towards the government's beach clean-up policy. Thus, there were statistically significant differences that appeared. First, younger tourists (less than 30 years old) positively preferred this policy to elderly tourists who are in the retirement group. The reason could be the effects of the policy to ability at high ages. More importantly, they were repeat visitors and normally spent a longer time on the beach. Meanwhile, younger tourists were mostly first time visitors with a tendency of spending time on the beach less than the elderly. This implies that younger tourists mostly did

not have past experiences with Patong Beach, especially its condition over the last two decades so that the policy does not have much effect on their travelling. Moreover, it could be seen that Asian nationalities viewed this policy more positively than Europeans. Asians, Australians and New Zealanders also spent less time on the beach compared to Europeans. Therefore, they had higher satisfaction levels than Europeans. Interestingly, for the amount of money spent, tourists from Saudi Arabia, The Middle East and Russia spent more money than tourists from Asia, Australia and New Zealand. As a result, it could be suggested here that the local government and TAT may design different strategies for each segment as they have different perceptions and preferences. Also, multi-lingual information and creative enticing advertising might be beneficial to draw more first time visitors and repeat visitors.

Practical Implications

The findings in this study hold practical implications for several stakeholders in Phuket's tourism industry. Firstly, the government should eminently improve and maintain "underlying facilities and services" in good conditions, i.e. public toilets, shower facilities and adequate bins and elevated lifeguards. Moreover, they should progressively monitor the policy while local authorities could concentrate on "ascetic evaluation" from reaction. Notably, the proportions of beach zone management should be reorganized for an optimal balance based on the majority of tourists' perceptions and preferences, especially sunbathing areas and permitted facilities on the beach such as beach beds and chairs. Secondly, all business operators on Patong Beach should pay particular attention on "quality of service" and "reliability" to create distinctive image and build up lone relationship with them. Especially, "snorkeling services" which has become an interesting activity on Patong Beach recently. Furthermore, effectiveness of "communication" is very essential in the tourism industry due to

some businesses need to provide information in many languages so that they are able to communicate and serve the tourists better, specifically, tourists from Russia, Saudi Arabia and the Middle East which are potential tourist groups with high purchasing power. Ultimately, great efforts on collaboration between the government and business operators are thoroughly needed.

Limitations

Seemingly, the government's beach clean-up policy at Patong Beach is still indeterminate and there are some modifications on the original action plans. However this study focuses on the first regulations which were announced on the 25th of February 2014. Also, another potential limitation was the selection the qualified respondents to complete the questionnaires as the government's beach clean-up policy is quite elaborate, thus a short talk with respondents to provide detailed information about the policy was required.

Theoretical implications for Further Research

Several theoretical implications for further research can be proposed. Firstly, a qualitative research with potential tourists in Patong Beach including Asian, European, Australian and New Zealand tourists could be conducted to gain in-depth knowledge on specific issues. Secondly, an in-depth interview with the government would be a valuable thing to do in order to get explicit directions. In addition to this, focus groups with business operators around Patong Beach may be effective as Kitzinger J. (1995) mentioned that focus groups are very suitable to the study of attitudes and experiences.

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